invention. For example, the described implementation includes software but the present invention may be implemented as a combination of hardware and software or in hardware alone. The invention may be implemented with both object-oriented and non-object-oriented programming systems. Additionally, although aspects of the present invention are described as being stored in memory, one skilled in the art will appreciate that these aspects can also be stored on other types of computer-readable media, such as secondary storage devices, like hard disks, floppy disks, or CD-ROM; a carrier wave from the Internet or other propagation medium; or other forms of RAM or ROM. The scope of the invention is defined by the claims and their equivalents.

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method for providing information regarding savings associated travel alternatives comprising the steps, performed by a processor, of:

receiving a request from a user reflecting a travel itinerary;

analyzing the travel itinerary to determine a set of alternative itineraries comparable to the travel itinerary specified in the request based on selected rules associated with travel;

determining a value for the travel itinerary specified in the request;

determining a value for each of the alternative itineraries; and

generating a report reflecting the analysis and determinations.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein the report includes the travel itinerary specified in the request, each of the alternative itineraries, the value for each travel

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itinerary, and a difference between the value for the travel itinerary specified in the request and each of the alternative itineraries.

3. The method of claim 1, wherein the request includes proximity tolerances specifying a user's acceptable range for alternative itineraries.

4. The method of claim 3, wherein the request includes the name of an originating location and a destination, and wherein the analyzing step includes locating any alternate lodging that is within the proximity tolerances.

5. The method of claim 1, wherein the request includes the name of an originating location and a destination; and wherein the receiving step includes assigning geographical coordinates for each of the originating location and the destination.

6. The method of claim 5, wherein the analyzing step includes generating a set of locations with coordinates located within a predetermined range of the destination based on information from a geographical coordinates database.

7. The method of claim 6, wherein the step of generating a set of locations includes reducing the range when a number of locations in the set exceeds a predetermined number.

8. The method of claim 6, wherein the step of generating a set of locations includes increasing the range when a number of locations in the set is smaller than a predetermined number.

9. The method of claim 1, wherein the request includes the name of an originating location and a destination, and wherein the analyzing step includes identifying any intermediate locations in a route between the originating location and a destination.

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10. The method of claim 1, wherein the request includes the name of an originating location and a destination, and wherein the analyzing step includes locating any predetermined travel packages that include travel between the originating location and a destination.

11. The method of claim 1, wherein the generating step includes:

sending at least one price-to-beat request to a selected service provider reflecting information on the travel itinerary with a value associated with the determined value for the travel itinerary specified in the request and the determined value for each of the alternative itineraries; and

receiving a response from the service provider with information on a travel itinerary and a value of that travel itinerary, wherein the travel itinerary from the service provider may be the same or comparable, according to the service provider, to the user's travel itinerary or one of the alternative itineraries.

12. A computer-readable medium containing instructions for causing a computer to perform a method for providing information regarding savings associated travel alternatives, the method comprising the steps of

receiving a request from the user reflecting a travel itinerary;

analyzing the travel itinerary to determine a set of alternative itineraries comparable to the travel itinerary specified in the request based on selected rules associated with travel;

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determining a value for the travel itinerary specified in the request; determining a value for each of the alternative itineraries; and generating a report reflecting the analysis and determinations.

13. The computer-readable medium of claim 12, wherein the report includes the travel itinerary specified in the request, each of the alternative itineraries, the value for each travel itinerary, and a difference between the value for the travel itinerary specified in the request and each of the alternative itineraries.

14. The computer-readable medium of claim 12, wherein the request includes proximity tolerances specifying a user's acceptable range for alternative itineraries.

15. The computer-readable medium of claim 14, wherein the request includes the name of an originating location and a destination, and wherein the analyzing step includes locating any alternate lodging that is within the proximity tolerances.

16. The computer-readable medium of claim 12, wherein the request includes the name of an originating location and a destination; and wherein the receiving step includes assigning geographical coordinates for each of the originating location and the destination.

17. The computer-readable medium of claim 16, wherein the analyzing step includes generating a set of locations with coordinates located within a predetermined range of the destination based on information from a geographical coordinates database.

18. The computer-readable medium of claim 17, wherein the step of generating a set of locations includes reducing the range when a number of locations in the set exceeds a predetermined number.

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19. The computer-readable medium of claim 17, wherein the step of generating a set of locations includes increasing the range when a number of locations in the set is smaller than a predetermined number.

20. The computer-readable medium of claim 12, wherein the request includes the name of an originating location and a destination, and wherein the analyzing step includes identifying any ~~intermediate locations in a route between the originating location~~ and a destination.

21. The computer-readable medium of claim 12, wherein the request includes the name of an originating location and a destination, and wherein the analyzing step includes locating any predetermined travel packages that include travel between the originating location and a destination.

22. The computer-readable medium of claim 12, wherein the generating step includes:

sending at least one price-to-beat request to a selected service provider reflecting information on the travel itinerary with a value associated with the determined value for the travel itinerary specified in the request and the determined value for each of the alternative itineraries; and

receiving a response from the service provider with information on a travel itinerary and a value of that travel itinerary, wherein the travel itinerary from the service provider may be the same or comparable, according to the service provider, to the user's travel itinerary or one of the alternative itineraries.

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23. A computer system for providing information regarding savings associated travel alternatives comprising:

a buyer interface for producing a request from a user reflecting a travel itinerary; and

a server for analyzing the travel itinerary to determine a set of alternative itineraries comparable to the travel itinerary specified in the request based on selected rules associated with travel, for determining a value for the travel itinerary specified in the request, for determining a value for each of the alternative itineraries, and for generating a report reflecting the analysis and determinations.

24. The computer system of claim 23, wherein the report includes the travel itinerary specified in the request, each of the alternative itineraries, the value for each travel itinerary, and a difference between the value for the travel itinerary specified in the request and each of the alternative itineraries.

25. The computer system of claim 23, wherein the request includes proximity tolerances specifying a user's acceptable range for alternative itineraries.

26. The computer system of claim 25, wherein the request includes the name of an originating location and a destination, and wherein the analyzing step includes locating any alternate lodging that is within the proximity tolerances.

27. The computer system of claim 23, wherein the request includes the name of an originating location and a destination, and wherein the receiving step includes assigning geographical coordinates for each of the originating location and the destination.

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28. The computer system of claim 27, wherein the analyzing step includes generating a set of locations with coordinates located within a predetermined range of the destination based on information from a geographical coordinates database.

29. The computer system of claim 28, wherein the step of generating a set of locations includes reducing the range when a number of locations in the set exceeds a predetermined number.

30. The computer system of claim 28, wherein the step of generating a set of locations includes increasing the range when a number of locations in the set is smaller than a predetermined number.

31. The computer system of claim 23, wherein the request includes the name of an originating location and a destination, and wherein the analyzing step includes identifying any intermediate locations in a route between the originating location and a destination.

32. The computer system of claim 23, wherein the request includes the name of an originating location and a destination, and wherein the analyzing step includes locating any predetermined travel packages that include travel between the originating location and a destination.

33. The computer system of claim 23, including a trader interface for receiving price-to-beat requests from the server and for providing a response with information on a travel itinerary and a value of that travel itinerary, wherein the travel itinerary from the trader interface may be the same or comparable, according to the service provider, to the user's travel itinerary or one of the alternative itineraries.

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34. The computer system of claim 23, including a supplier interface for receiving price-to-beat requests from the server and for providing response with information on a travel itinerary and a value of that travel itinerary, wherein the travel itinerary from the supplier interface may be the same or comparable, according to the service provider, to the user's travel itinerary or one of the alternative itineraries.

35. The computer system of claim 23, including a supplier interface for receiving availability price requests from the server and for providing availability price responses with information on a travel itinerary and a value of that travel itinerary, wherein the travel itinerary from the supplier interface may be the same or comparable, according to the service provider, to the user's travel itinerary or one of the alternative itineraries.

36. A computer system for providing information regarding savings associated travel alternatives comprising:

an interface means for producing a request from a user reflecting a travel itinerary; and

a serving means for analyzing the travel itinerary to determine a set of alternative itineraries comparable to the travel itinerary specified in the request based on selected rules associated with travel, for determining a value for the travel itinerary specified in the request, for determining a value for each of the alternative itineraries, and for generating a report reflecting the analysis and determinations.

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